



YOU STREET

Co-Chairs ~ Sen. Bill Bradley • Sen. Bob Kerrey • Sen. Warren Rudman • Sen. Al Simpson

SUBMITTED FOR THE HEARING RECORD

**Senate Committee on Rules and Administration
February 2, 2010**

**Written testimony of former U.S. Senators Bill Bradley (D-NJ),
Bob Kerrey (D-NE), Warren Rudman (R-NH), and Alan Simpson (R-WY),
Co-Chairs of Americans for Campaign Reform**

We commend the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration today for taking up one of the most challenging and urgent issues before the Congress: the impact of private contributions and expenditures in U.S. elections and its corrosive effect on public confidence in our democracy – particularly in light of the disappointing decision in *Citizens United v. FEC*.

We write to you as Chairs of Americans for Campaign Reform, a bipartisan initiative to strengthen American democracy through citizen-funded Fair Elections. Our purpose is simple: to free elected leaders from the mounting pressures of raising campaign funds by supporting the passage of small donor-driven public campaign finance. The Fair Elections Now Act would accomplish that goal.

We have all seen how rising campaign costs and the influx of big money in politics undermines public confidence in our democracy and places undue burdens on elected officials. As we look back on our many years in Washington, it is hard to imagine how many hours were devoted to attending fundraisers and calling strangers for campaign contributions. Today, as you well know, the problem has gotten much worse. In 2008, the average House and Senate incumbent raised \$1.3 million and \$7.5 million, respectively—nearly twice the amounts raised just ten years ago. That means that you and your colleagues must collect thousands of dollars a day throughout your term in office--time spent away from doing the real work you came to Washington to do.

We know of only one way to fundamentally address this problem: small donor-driven campaign finance reform. A Fair Elections system of matching small donations would ensure that hard-working candidates who accept only small checks from their constituents and show broad-based

public support, have access to sufficient funding to mount a credible campaign. It combines what works in our current finance system—citizen small donations—with matching funds to ensure an open debate. And it rejects what does not work: big money from lobbyists and special interest groups which undermines public confidence and distracts from the business of governing.

Consistent with the First Amendment, the program is voluntary; it cherishes political speech by enabling more voices to enter the debate without added regulation. Funding would come from a revenue-neutral allocation of 10% of future broadcast spectrum auctions for House elections.

In seven states and numerous cities from Arizona to Maine, citizen funded Fair Elections are ushering in a new kind of politics, where candidates spend more time with the voters they seek to represent in place of large contributors. Three-fourths of candidates across party lines voluntarily participate in the state programs, bringing a new culture of accountability, and the chance to now bring meaningful reform to Washington in the 111th Congress has never been greater.

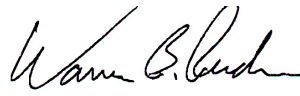
We urge the Committee on Rules and Administration to refer this urgent legislation and to the full Senate for consideration and passage this year. The integrity of our democratic institutions depends on such reform.



Sen. Bill Bradley
New Jersey



Sen. Bob Kerrey
Nebraska



Sen. Warren Rudman
New Hampshire



Sen. Al Simpson
Wyoming